

Grytsenko M.

Functional Approach to Translation of Crossover Fiction

Mariia Grytsenko, PhD student

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv, Ukraine

Abstract. The article focuses on the basic framework of functional approach to translation of crossover fiction. This research also provides an insight into the ambivalent nature of crossover fiction by showing the possibility of harnessing its crossover potential in translation. The decision-making process is governed by the *skopos* (purpose) of translation with regard to the situation of translation, and in particular the projected target reader-in-situation. A new positioning of the book in the target culture reveals reader-oriented strategies at work in the translation project.

Keywords: *crossover fiction, crossover potential, functional approach, target readership, dual audience, skopos*

Crossover fiction cannot be considered a completely new literary phenomenon. The field of literary criticism has already presented a number of works on this subject, notably those by S. Beckett and R. Falconer, although the translation studies has yet to see its comprehensive research. This type of literature includes novels by prominent contemporary authors such as U.K. Le Guin, M. Haddon, Ph. Pullman, J.K. Rowling, S. Rushdie, etc. Given the lack of seminal works in this domain, the challenges considered in this article remain topical for furthering translation research of crossover potential in the target cultural environment. Crossover fiction in translation is usually examined in case studies, e.g. by A. Urban [11], M. Rudvin and F. Orlati [10], therefore it is taken up as a material for translation research but not as a complex object as, undoubtedly, it deserves to be.

This article bases its theoretical and methodological framework on the functional approach to translation, postulated in the *Skopos* theory authored by K. Reiss and H. Vermeer and in the theory of translational action by J. Holz-Manttari. Therefore, this research aims at developing a functional framework for translation of crossover fiction taken in its entirety as a distinct category of literature and an object of translation and criticism.

Crossover literature requires its own separate approach on the part of translation scholars and practitioners. O. Rebriy argues that texts with dual communicative address – intended for children and adults – still pose a theoretical challenge in that the researchers remain in doubt as to their possible (if ever necessary) classification as children's literature [1, p. 91].

Crossover fiction is a widespread phenomenon; it is a popular modern development in the literary field and market. According to S. Beckett, crossover fiction is now recognized as a distinct literary genre and a marketing category by critics, publishers, booksellers, writers, and readers. In today's culture, crossover literature is very much in vogue. It comprises literary triumphs as well as commercial hits [2, p. 14-15].

R. Falconer states that 'crossover fiction' represents too varied a group of novels to be identified as a distinct genre or class of fiction. But the inconclusiveness of the term, in her opinion, accurately reflects the amorphous nature of the corpus of literature which we have in view [5, p. 27].

S. Beckett concludes that crossover literature refers to fiction that crosses from child to adult or adult to child audiences. Both adults and children are able to share more or less equally, albeit in different ways, in the reading experience. Crossover fiction blurs the borderline be-

tween two traditionally separate readerships: children and adults. In fact, crossover literature addresses a diverse, cross-generational audience that can include readers of all ages: children, adolescents, and adults [2, p. 3].

Crossover fiction possesses a distinctive feature: a shift from one age group of readers to another. Even if in the original culture the text in most cases does not undergo any changes, the extratextual features do change, specifically the readers' attitude, the positioning of the book on the literary market, and, most importantly its target audience. The publisher positions the text, which opens several options considering the target age group: children, adults or a mixed audience.

Crossover potential means that any crossover text can change its audience in the target culture from the very conception of the translation project. This characteristic suggests that the translator working on a crossover text must ensure that the translation is accepted by the projected audience. C. Nord claims that even if a source text has been written without any particular purpose or intention, the translation is always addressed to some audience (however undefined it may be) and is thus intended to have some function for the readers [9, p. 83].

The translation strategy used to achieve the intended effect can presuppose either a certain deviation from the original or the opposite – a systematic replication of its features. Functional approach to crossover fiction in general focuses on the possibilities and means of harnessing its crossover potential. A crossover text does not automatically demands dual audience in translation in the target language.

Functional approach allows for a broad interdisciplinary basis within the framework of the target culture of a translation. The intended context of existence of a crossover novel will eventually define the translation both as a process and a product.

The nature of crossover fiction encourages a change in its perception in the target culture, which means that the success of the translation with the intended audience becomes the ultimate goal of the translation project. The situation of translation provides the background for decision-making process, although the translation strategy is planned according to the model of the situation of translational action. The aforementioned model covers most relevant situational factors.

Functional approach forms the basis for the modeling of the situation of translational action. This research suggests applying this approach to translation, analysis, and criticism of crossover fiction. Consistency in translation of crossover fiction requires functional background for

quality assessment and assurance, and for translation criticism. Therefore, this approach caters for the complete cycle of the translation project from pre-translation stage to the post-translation analysis of readers' feedback.

The two basic notions in this approach are: (a) *situation*; (b) **-in-situation*. Situation is viewed here as a system of relevant factors with an internal hierarchy. A work of crossover fiction is always inscribed in the context of its existence, both actual and prospective. The notion **-in-situation* includes a work of fiction (the original and its translation) and participants of the translation project. Translation of crossover novel as a process takes the form of a translation project with a number of participants with their respective duties, all of them pursuing a common goal. The participants of the translation project are equally responsible for its successful completion.

The audience of crossover fiction presupposes ambivalent target readership of the original that requires (re-)orientation in translation. This is the key factor in the situation of translation. As C. Nord states, one of the most important factors determining the purpose of the translation is the addressee, who is the intended receiver or audience of the target text with their culture-specific world-knowledge, their expectations and their communicative needs [9, p. 12]. She states that the information about the addressees is of particular importance. The more unequivocal and definite the description of the target addressee, the easier it is for translators to make their decisions in the course of the translation process [8, p. 11].

The space of existence for crossover fiction is a literary one, that's why the translator is responsible on the one hand before the commissioner, as he/she has to fulfill the translation brief, and on the other hand before the author of the original and the target readers of the translation.

Functional approach emphasizes the importance of translation quality. The advantage of functionalism is that it insures consistency in the use of translation strategies and principles of critical analysis.

Literary translation is usually regarded separately from other types of translation. Nonetheless, a translated work of fiction is a product too, with its cultural capital and market value. It is inevitably reader-oriented and occupies its own market niche, and last but not least, it has to be profitable for the publisher. The notion of translation in the industry as defined by J. Drugan reads: (usually) paid, for a client, to a deadline, with an intended end use and some sort of translation specification [4, p. 8]. The translation industry is not concerned with literary translation, although the aforementioned definition comes extremely close to the way the translation is treated by the publishers. However, when it comes to the purpose of translation, the focus is shifted to the much more pronounced aesthetic and cultural value of the text in question.

What will be the result of the translation project? How do we assess translation of crossover fiction? These challenges require certain prognostic vision of the projected translation: whether it will be an aesthetic or social project; whether the chosen age group of readers is relevant to the situation of translation. The model demands irrelevant factors to be removed on the pre-translation stage of the translation project.

The translation of crossover fiction can be considered functionally adequate when it meets the goal of the transla-

tion project; when it is reader-oriented; and when it preserves a certain previously agreed on measure of originality.

Functional approach focuses on the end product – a translated work of fiction and its success with the intended audience. The object of research is a translated text-in-situation. Ambivalence of the target audience of crossover fiction and instability of the situation of translation demand the focus to be moved to the relevant factors of the situation of translation. What kind of target audience will the translation have? The original text cannot give an answer to this question because the translation will be functioning in a different cultural and social environment.

Functionalism generates a shift in importance from the source text to the target text. The aim of translation in most general terms is successful intercultural communication. C. Nord concludes that if the translation is to be suitable for a certain purpose, it must fulfill certain requirements, which are defined by the translating instructions or translation brief [8, p. 10].

Functional approach is ultimately practical. Its advantage for crossover fiction is manifested in the harnessing of crossover potential of any work of fiction that requires a new audience (e.g. a different age group) in the target culture. In this case, however, the translator's choice must be justified. The ambivalent audience always poses a challenge because a wrong addressee may get a wrong impression or a negative one, which results in a skewed perception of a novel and a failed introduction of a new literary piece into the target cultural context.

Efficient translation strategy for a crossover novel largely depends on the choice of the target readership. Although in this case it is not a generalized reader but a target reader-in-situation.

Possible new positioning of crossover fiction should not be viewed as an attempt to falsify author's intentions because the original enters the literary market following a similar scenario. The positioning of the original does not depend solely on the author. It can be defined by the publisher, and, in its final form, by the readers themselves within a certain time framework, as there is always a chance of an unplanned and unexpected readership. In this regard J. Munday notes that the readers are 'positioned' by the text (and, of course, by the text producer), but their reading position cannot be completely predetermined [7, p. 37]. The translator should bear in mind both the "envisioned" and the "actual" because every work of fiction is always received by a reader-in-situation.

Indeed, the situation of translation limits the translator but at the same time it unleashes his/her creative approach to achieving the purpose (skopos) of translation. This reveals the duality of translator's role: on the one hand he/she depends on the actual situation, but on the other hand he/she modifies it as an active participant of the translation project.

Taking into account the original dual audience of crossover fiction, functional approach can also provide a basis for translation criticism. C. Nord suggests that the process of translation criticism has to begin with an analysis of the target text-in-situation [8, p. 182]. The translation critic has to judge whether the target text is functional in terms of the translation context [9, p. 9].

B. Mossop defines the editor or reviser as a gatekeeper, who corrects the text so that it conforms to society's linguistic and textual rules and achieves the publisher's goals; and as a language therapist who improves the text to insure ease of mental processing and suitability of the text for its future users [6, p. 18].

In this case a translation critic is not expected to compare certain elements of the translation to its original, but to assess the functionality and quality of a translation-in-situation. The question to be answered is whether the translation fulfills its assigned function. Crossover fiction is defined by its target readership; therefore the target readers' feedback is bound to be referenced, if the relevance of translation strategy needs critical assessment. Finally, among the twenty principles for revision B. Mossop gives the following: in the final analysis, give preference to the reader's needs over the client's demands [6, p. 205].

Deeper understanding of what motivates the translator's decisions helps avoid biased assessment of translation quality, in particular when it comes to adaptation. Thus functional approach "validates" flexibility by allowing for the nexus of translation brief and responsibility before the author of the original in a translation strategy for crossover fiction.

According to J. Drugan, both in translation studies and in the profession all aspects of translation quality are relative [4, p. 37]. Similarly to J. Drugan, B. Mossop argues that quality is always relative to needs. There is no such thing as absolute quality [6, p. 22].

The translation quality of crossover fiction should be approached with the view of the situation of its functioning. M. Cronin argues that the singularity of the original

means the copyist's task is properly infinite, the journey of replication never-ending. He argues that the fact that translations quickly become obsolete is not an admission of incompetence or failure. The attempt to create a true likeness can only succeed if it fails. The incompleteness of any translation is the very principle of its future creativity [3, p. 131].

The concluded research shows that functional approach to crossover fiction has a substantial situational element to it: the process and product of translation are always considered in situation. This standpoint proves the relevance of parallel editions for different target readerships of the same work of crossover fiction. Parallel editions can take form of multiple translations or 'repackagings' of the only existing translation provided in each particular case with specific paratexts (written by the translator or literary critic).

Translation brief together with the situation of translation defines the skopos of a crossover novel. As a result, the positioning of the book becomes increasingly relevant to the situation of its functioning. Therefore the target text becomes a vehicle for the function assigned to it in the translation project. Its function may be protective, if there is a need to shield the target culture, or the target language in particular, from an overpowering influence of the foreign culture; or, it may as well be informative or exoticizing if the commissioner wants the text to introduce readers to unknown elements of the foreign culture. The highlight of functionalism in general is its sensitivity towards the ambivalent nature of crossover fiction and ever-changing circumstances in the target culture of translation.

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Гриценко М.В. Функциональный подход к переводу кроссовер-литературы

Аннотация. Статья посвящена установлению базовых рамок функционального подхода к переводу кроссовер-литературы. Также исследуется амбивалентная природа кроссовер-литературы путем демонстрации возможностей реализации кроссовер-потенциала в переводе. В переводческом проекте процесс принятия решений зависит от скопоса (цели) перевода в ситуации перевода, и в особенности от запланированной целевой аудитории-в-ситуации. Новое позиционирование книги в целевой культуре также свидетельствует об использовании в переводческом проекте стратегий, ориентированных на целевого читателя.

Ключевые слова: кроссовер-литература, кроссовер-потенциал, функциональный подход, целевой читатель, двойная аудитория, скопос